



AMADINA MODESTA: Gould

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Plain-coloured Finch.

Amadina modesta, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part IV. p. 105 ; and in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part I.

THE native habitat of this species of Finch, so far as is yet known, is confined to New South Wales, where it inhabits the stony ridges bordering the large plains. I have known it to cross the Liverpool range and take up its summer abode in the flats of the Upper Hunter, but this proximity to the coast is rare. I found it tolerably abundant on the Liverpool Plains and on the banks of the Namoi, and Mr. Gilbert also mentions his having observed it on the low ranges to the northward of Moreton Bay. In its habits, actions and economy no remarkable differences were observed from those of the other species of the genus.

It is usually seen in pairs or associated in small companies, feeding either on or near the ground ; the seeds of grasses and other annuals forming its chief supply of food.

A nest found by Mr. Gilbert was of a domed form, composed of grasses, and contained five or six white eggs, about half an inch long by three-eighths broad.

The sexes may be distinguished by the absence of the black mark in the female, as shown in the accompanying Plate.

The male has the fore-part of the head deep crimson-red ; lores and a spot on the chin black ; nape of the neck, mantle and back brown ; wings brown ; tertials (which are very long in this species), together with the greater and lesser quill-feathers, having a spot of white at the tip ; rump and upper tail-coverts alternately barred with lines of greyish white and brown ; tail-feathers black, the two outer ones on each side tipped with white ; under surface white, transversely barred with lines of brown, which are strongest on the flanks ; middle of the abdomen and under tail-coverts white ; bill black ; irides reddish brown ; eyes surrounded by a very narrow lash of blackish brown ; legs flesh-white.

The female differs in having the colouring of the crown less extensive, and in wanting the black on the chin and lores.

The figures represent the two sexes of the natural size.